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AN ENQUIRY
INTO
THE GROUNDS
ON WHICH
THE PROPHETIC PERIOD
OF
DANIEL AND ST. JOHN,
HAS BEEN
SUPPOSED TO CONSIST OF 1260 YEARS.

BY THE REV. S. R. MAITLAND.

SECOND EDITION.

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AND T. JEW, GLOUCESTER;
AND SOLD BY
STRONG, BRISTOL AND EXETER; AND MILLIKEN, DUBLIN.

1837.

82708

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RARE WESTERN BOOKS
4227 S. E. Stark St.
PORTLAND, ORE.

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PRINTED BY BRYANT AND JEFFERIES, WESTGATE STREET.

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IT was my intention to have prefixed to this reprint of my Enquiry, some account of the Controversy to which it gave rise ; but, on further consideration, it appears to me that by so doing I should not only greatly increase the size of the work, and so probably prevent its being read by those who are the most valuable readers, because their time is valuable to themselves, but also render it less intelligible to those who have not considered the subject, and whose attention I particularly desire to engage.

Before I ask the reader to enter into disputed details, I wish to persuade him to give a few minutes to the consideration of the main question

than believe what is wrong. Whether, in this case, I am opposing an error, it is not my province to decide, but fully believing that I am, I feel it a duty to promote investigation of the grounds on which it has been taken up. If I am wrong, and the doctrine which I oppose is well founded, such an enquiry will undoubtedly lead to its further confirmation, and it will not continue to rest on evidence which others, as well as myself, have found unsatisfactory.

After much consideration, I feel convinced that, "*the time, times, and dividing of time*; Dan. vii. 25:" "*Time, times, and a half*;" Dan. xii. 7: "*Time, times, and half a time*; Rev. xii. 14: "*Forty and two months*;" Rev. xi. ii—xiii. 5: "*The thousand two hundred and threescore days*; Rev. xi. 3: are not mystical phrases relating to a period of 1260 years; but, according to their plain meaning, denote a period of 1260 natural days.

I believe it to be a rule of sound criticism, that we should take the literal sense of every writer, unless sufficient reasons can be given for departing from it. Whether those generally assigned for the mystical interpretations of the passages just cited, are satisfactory, I proceed to enquire.

In order to put the reader in full possession of the subject, I shall subjoin the reasons generally assigned as they stand at the beginning of Mr. Faber's Dissertation on the 1260 years, because I believe that work is generally known and respected, and contains all the arguments which I recollect to have seen produced in

favour of the mystical interpretation by any writer. He says,

"That *the 1260 days* are not mere *literal days*, but that they are *years*, is alike manifest from the usage both of Daniel and St. John themselves, from finding ourselves expressly warranted by scripture to interpret a *prophetic day* by a *year*, from the impossibility of all the circumstances ascribed to the period of *the 1260 days* taking place within the short compass of 1260 *literal days*, and from the specification of the period *about* which *the 1260 days* must have commenced."

"I. We may venture to assume, that the same mode of computation, which is used by an author in one passage of his writings, will be used by him in all other passages; at least in those which are marked by the common feature of treating, not of the fate of individuals, but of the fortune of communities. Hence, if any of the numerical prophecies of Daniel and St. John be *already* accomplished, we shall thereby have a clue for ascertaining the proper method of computing the numbers mentioned in their other numerical prophecies."

"Now we find that Daniel's famous prophecy of *the 70 weeks*, whatever particular difficulties there may be in the explanation of it, has been proved, by the event of our Lord's advent and death, to speak, not of *weeks of days*, but of *weeks of years*: and we likewise find from the event, that *the apocalyptic ten days' persecution of the church of Smyrna*, (Rev. ii. 10) means *the ten years' persecution carried on by Diocletian*."

"It seems, therefore, only natural to conclude, that *the three times, or years and a half, the 42 months, the 1260 days, the 2300 days, the 1290 days, the 1335 days, the three days and a half, and the five months*, of these two prophets are to be computed in the same manner *each day* in each number being estimated as a *year*."

Certainly nothing can be more reasonable than to

assume, that the same mode of computation which is used by an author in one passage of his writings, will be used by him in all other passages; but why is it added, "at least in those which are marked by the common feature of treating, not of the fate of individuals, but of the fortune of communities?" Is it customary with writers when speaking of *individuals*, to adopt a mode of computation different from that which they use when speaking of *communities*? Can any writer be adduced, whose practice gives colour to this limitation? Who ever heard of such a thing, and what should lead us to think of making such a distinction in the present case? I know of nothing, except that without some such arbitrary and purely fanciful distinction, it would have been impossible to bring forward the only passage in Daniel which appears to favour the argument, or to set aside another which seems to me directly to oppose it.

The former of these passages is that respecting "the 70 weeks," which I do not deny to have been proved by the event, to be "weeks of years." To be sure the proposition itself, taken strictly, would exclude this case; for the period which is the subject of our enquiry, though it stands in the scripture in terms of *days*, *months*, and *years*, is not calculated by *weeks*. Waiving, however, this consideration, the argument obviously rests on the assumption, that the "seventy sevens" spoken of by Daniel, would plainly and unequivocally signify "sevens of *days*," if taken literally. Yet it seems to me that we cannot properly assume

this; and I have considerable doubt whether any person, ignorant of the fulfilment of the prophecy, and conversant with the Hebrew Bible only, would take it for granted, that the prophet was speaking of weeks (or more properly "sevens") of *days*.

On this point I think that christian writers have made a concession to infidels, which the Jews themselves do not ask, and which truth does not require. The Jews, however blind they may be to the fulfilment of this prediction, have never been wholly unacquainted with the language of the prophet, and the mode of computation and expression used by their own writers; and when these points are considered, perhaps the reader will agree with me, that there is no such absolute necessity for a mystical interpretation "of the seventy weeks," as he may have supposed to exist.

(1) We are, ourselves, accustomed not only to speak of "weeks" (meaning exclusively weeks of *days*) but also to calculate time, *by weeks*. Every reader is familiar with this, and is accustomed to speak of "three weeks," "six weeks," &c. He would think it strange if any one, in speaking or writing should, without some special reason, designate such periods by "twenty-one days," "forty-two days," &c. In short, we *commonly* reduce days to weeks, weeks to months, and months to years. Such, however, I believe, was not the custom of the writers of the scripture. The period of the feast of weeks, was, indeed, fixed by counting seven weeks from a given time; but, beside

this, I know of *only one* place in the scriptures,¹ where a period is described as consisting of any number of weeks. This occurs Dan. x. 2, 3, where he states that he was sick during three weeks. In all other places, I think the reader will find periods of time expressed in terms of *days, months, or years*. And this even where the numbers of days are such as we should most probably reduce into *weeks*. For instance—though Daniel, in the passage just quoted, speaks of “three weeks,” he expresses the same period in another place by “twenty-one days,” עשרים ואחד יום Daniel x. 13. In I. Kings, viii. 65, we read that Solomon held a feast “seven days and seven days, even fourteen (or literally ‘four, ten’) days,” שבועת ימים ושבעת ימים ארבעה עשר יום. Here we may observe, that the word *day* is thrice repeated, and that the numbers *seven, ten, and four*, are used four times, in order to express what we should call “two weeks,” or a “fort-night.” Again, in Gen. i. 3, we find a period of ten weeks expressed by “seventy days.” Taking these circumstances into consideration, I submit that we should not naturally expect a Hebrew writer to express a period of 490 days by “seventy weeks,” and should consider it as somewhat singular, if we found that he had done so.

(2) As the Jews were not in the habit of calculating by weeks, so it was not their custom to express

¹ Unless Lev. xii. 5, which will be spoken of presently, be also considered as an exception.

the period of seven days by *any one word*. I believe it may be laid down as a *general rule*, that the inspired writers did not use שבע, שבועה, or שבת, or *any other word*, to signify a *week*, but that they expressed the period by שבועת ימים, “seven days.”² The passage

² I say a *general* rule, because it may appear to some that there are three exceptions to it; and though I do not feel that they have much weight, I set them down.

(1) Lev. xii. 5. It is said that a woman, after the birth of a male child, shall be unclean “seven days,” שבועת ימים. and after the birth of a female, שבעים “sevens,” or as we translate, “two weeks.” Whether this is anything more than such an elliptical form of expression, as is common in all languages, when (as in this case) the context renders any mistake impossible, do not determine. I have not found it elsewhere in the scriptures.

(2) Wishing to bring forward every thing which others might produce against my statement, I add the “seven” שבע, translated “week.” Gen. xxix. 27, 28; though commentators are not agreed whether it relates to the *days* of Leah’s wedding feast, or the *years* of Jacob’s servitude. I am not aware of any other particular exceptions, but there is;—

(3) A general exception, when the feast of weeks is spoken of. This feast, which continued during *seven* days, fixed by counting *seven* times *seven* days, might naturally be called the feast of *sevens*; but I believe it is not mentioned by that name more than *eight* times. These few are, I believe, all the passages which even seem to form any exception to the rule, that whenever a period of *seven days* is meant in the scripture, the word “*days* is expressed.” In support of it, I might refer to nearly sixty passages which I have examined, but they may be so readily found, that it is needless. Cruden, in his English Concordance, (in the division “seven days,” under the word “day,”) has collected more references than most readers will have the patience to turn out in a Hebrew Bible, and quite enough to establish the rule.

already cited from the first book of Kings will shew how the word "day" is repeated; and, that which I have quoted from the book of Daniel, though it formed an exception to the last rule, falls under this, for, in speaking of his sickness, he expressly says, that it lasted during three "sevens of *days*." Such (except in the few places noticed below). I believe to be the invariable practice of the sacred writers. The word *days*, accompanying "seven" will be recollected, if it has not been remarked, by the reader; and perhaps he will agree with me, that in a passage where the word "sevens" stands by itself, it is by no means to be assumed, that sevens of *days* (or what we call weeks) must be meant, when every writer of the scriptures who has occasion to mention such a period as "seven days," expresses it in a different manner. Might not a Jew, before the fulfilment of the prophecy, have fairly argued, that if Daniel had meant "sevens of days," he would, in conformity with the custom of all the sacred writers, and in consistency with himself, have inserted the word "days?" That, as he had not done so, it was at least probable, that he meant some other sevens?

I not only believe that a Jew might fairly argue thus, but it seems to me likely that he would, because I find the Misnic writers using the very word which we translate "week," in Daniel's prophecy, to signify *the space between one sabbatical year and another*. As far as I have observed, this period is uniformly expressed in the Mishna by שבע, placed simply—that is,

as it stands in the book of Daniel, and without any addition to signify that years are meant. Thus, in one place,³ we read of taking a field for a "few years," לשנים מועטות, where the reader will observe, that *years* are specified; but the next section speaks of taking it for "one seven," שבוע אחת. We find, too, the "remaining years of the seven" repeatedly expressed by שאר שני שבוע.⁴ The tenth section of Baba Metzia, already cited, not only shews that the Jewish writers understood by שבוע, a period of seven years, but that they used it particularly to express the period between one sabbatical year and another. The point there decided is, the difference between taking a field for "one seven," לשבוע אחת, and for "seven years," שבע שנים. In the former case the tenant, and in the latter the landlord, was to bear the loss of the sabbatical year; a rule as just and equitable as it would be among us to decide, that he who hires a labourer for "a week" has a right to only six days' labour, while he who bargains for "seven days" service, has a right to the full number.

I do not say that שבוע is never used by the Misnic writers to signify a week of days, because I know it is sometimes to be found in that sense; but, as far I know, they most commonly use שבת or שבועת ימים. Their use of the word, however, is the most striking when they have occasion to speak of *sevens of days*, and *sevens of years*, in the same sentence. When this

³ Baba Metzia, c. ix. § 9, 10. ⁴ Shevi'ith, c. iv. § 7, 8, 9.

happens, they express the week of days by שבת, and the week of years by שבוע—that is by the single word used in Daniel. Thus, in Nedarim, c. viii. § 1, the duration of vows is discussed when made in terms of “to day,” היום; “this week,” שבת זו; “this month,” חדש זה; “this year,” שנה זו; “this seven,” שבוע זה. The same series is repeated in the same section; and, again, in Baba Metzia, c. ix. § 11, we read of a workman of a week, of a month, of a year, of a seven; שכיר שבת, שכיר חדש, שכיר שנה, שכיר שבוע.

On these grounds, I think that a reader of Daniel, who had not heard the period called “seventy weeks,” or been in any way prepossessed on the subject, would not necessarily suppose that the prophet spoke of “sevens” of days, and might very probably understand him to speak of “sevens” of years. I have entered into this matter the more fully, because I have not seen either of these points stated, though they seem to be of some importance, not only to my own argument, but towards illustrating the prophecy of the seventy weeks.⁵

⁵ Since I put together these remarks, I have found the following brief, but confirmatory, note, in Grotius. “*Septuaginta Hebdomades. Annorum. Ita enim mos erat loquendi, et manet apud Thalmudicos. Ideo ubi de dierum hebdomade agitur solet adjici dierum nomen. Ezek. xlv. 21; infra x. 2 and 3, in Hebræo.*” The very excellent and learned author of the history of the Jews, in the Universal History, says, “The generality of the Jews do agree with us, that those prophetic weeks are weeks of years, or of a day for a year, according to the prophetic style” (vol. x. p. 477.) He gives no

For my own purpose, perhaps, it would have been sufficient to point out the “sevens of days” (Dan. x. 2, 3,) for our enquiry is simply, whether Daniel does in his prophecy of the seventy weeks, so clearly express *weeks of days*, as that when we find the word “days” expressed in other places, we should feel ourselves warranted to translate it into “years.” It seems to me, that in order to bear the weight thus laid upon them, the seventy weeks should have been expressly called “*weeks of days*.” Then, if the fulfilment had been delayed 490 years, we should have learned that a day was put for a year, and should have had some colour for interpreting it so in other places. I refer the question, however, to the reader, only reminding him that unless we admit, not only the most obvious, but the necessary, sense, of “sevens,” placed simply, to

authority, and I suspect he would have had some difficulty in finding one, among the Jews, for calling such a calculation as a day for a year, “according to the prophetic style;” and I think the reader will have found better reasons for their agreeing with us that the *sevens* are sevens of years. “Nec diffitentur Judæi.....Sic ergo Aben Ezra, ex R. Saadia שנים שבעים הם שנים hæ *hebdomadæ sunt annorum id est Sabbathici.* Et probat 1. quia paulo post Daniel loquitur de Hebdomadibus Dierum quæ limitatio hic abest.”—*Leydekker de Repub. Hebr.* II. 389.

I will not dissemble, however, that, at one period, the Jews appear to have had a mystical interpretation of the “times” of Daniel, which they considered as centuries. Thus Justyn Martyr, speaking of the reign of Antichrist, says to Trypho, ὑμεῖς ἀγνοῶντες πόσον χρόνον διακατέχειν μέλλει, ἄλλο ηἰσθῆναι. τὸν γὰρ καιρὸν ἑκατὸν ἔτη ἐξηγῆσθαι λέγεσθαι. p. 250, Edit. Colon. 1686. This interpretation, at least, shews that they did not interpret a day by a year.

be "weeks of *days*," the whole argument falls to the ground; for the mode of computation used in the passage cited, gives no colour for understanding 1260 *days* to mean 1260 *years*.

But I have said that, without the singular and arbitrary distinction respecting individuals and communities, those who maintain this doctrine would be obliged, in fairness, to bring forward another passage from the book of Daniel, which appears to me to oppose their argument; it is this—in chap. iv. 16, 23, 25, 32, we read of "*seven times*," during which Nebuchadnezzar was to be excluded from his kingdom. Here it is admitted on all hands that "time" means a *year*, and therefore, we might naturally expect that the three *times* and a half, in chap. vii. should mean three years and a half.

Surely, as Mr. Faber says, "we may venture to assume that, the same mode of computation which is used by an author in one passage of his writings, will be used by him in all other passages." Yet, (without the slightest hint of any change of style in the author) we are to suppose Daniel using the same word, in chap. iv. to signify "one year," and in chap. vii. to signify 360 years, and this *merely* because, in one case, he speaks of an *individual*, and in the other, of a *community*.

I have endeavoured to shew, that the whole force of the argument rests upon the limitation of a very reasonable proposition, which, without such a limitation, would be decidedly opposed to the mode of inter-

pretation which is maintained. It remains, therefore, for the reader to decide, whether there is any ground for such a limitation. None whatever is assigned, and to me, the assumption of it does not appear to be warranted.

Thus much relates to the prophecy of Daniel; but it is added, "We likewise find *from the event*, that the 'apocalyptic ten days' persecution of the church of Smyrna, means the ten years' persecution carried on by Diocletian."

Who would not imagine that the fulfilment of this prediction, in Diocletian's persecution, was an undisputed truth? I have no doubt that Mr. Faber fully believes it to refer to that period; but as long as it is a matter disputed by commentators, whether this passage has any reference whatever to Diocletian, and while, so far as I can find, a decided majority of them seem either expressly to refer it to other events, or else to be in acknowledged uncertainty respecting its application, I do not see how it can give us much help in the question; and surely it is too much to lay it at the foundation of an interpretation, so far from the literal meaning of plain words as that which it is brought forward to support.

I have looked into every expositor within my reach, and the following is the result: Bishop Newton and Dr. Hales agree with Mr. Faber in supposing that Diocletian's persecution is intended.⁶ Dr. Adam

⁶ See Bp. Newton on the place, and Dr. Hale's Analysis, vol. II.

Clarke goes only so far as to state that, the ten days *may* mean ten years, and that such was the duration of Diocletian's persecution. No other commentator, that I have met with, appears at all to sanction any reference to Diocletian. Grotius takes the words literally, and understands a period of ten natural days. L. Cappellus extends them to all the ten persecutions. Doddridge,⁷ Fleming, Scott,⁸ and Gauntlett,⁹ refer

p. 1296. As I have professed to give the full result of my enquiry on this point, I will add that there is another expositor who maintains the same opinion. The reader may give what weight he pleases to his authority, when he learns that he adapts this persecution to the church of Smyrna, by stating that Polycarp was one of the Diocletian martyrs. I feel that I do Mr. Faber no injustice by withholding the name of such a writer. [I do not think it necessary to reprint all the extracts which I gave in the former edition from the various commentators here named; or to add the names of those whose opinions I have since learned. Where there is no specific reference, the reader will understand that the opinion is stated in a commentary on the passage.]

⁷ Doddridge says, "Mr. Fleming (of the Resurrection, p. 129) with many others, thinks this refers to the persecution under Domitian, which continued about *ten years*; and was begun when John was banished into Patmos and saw those Revelations. But it may only signify a short and limited time."—*Fam. Exp. in. l.*

⁸ This may either mean ten years, which is recorded to have been the duration of Domitian's persecution, or a considerable, but limited, time."—*Comm. in. l.*

⁹ "This may either mean ten years, which is recorded to have been the duration of Domitian's persecution, or a very considerable time, the term *ten* being frequently used *indefinitely* for *many*."—*Exp. of Rev. p. 26.*

Mr. Gauntlett appears to have followed Mr. Scott—Mr. Scott

it to the times of *Domitian*. Junius and Brightman to the persecution by *Trajan*. Henry seems to understand an indefinite short time; Brown, an indefinite long time; and Guyse, upon the whole, inclines to think that the period intended is *indefinite*, without venturing to decide whether long or short.¹⁰

I cannot say how many commentators agree with Mr. Faber; but as I before stated, I have honestly searched every one within my reach; and I confidently refer it to the reader to decide what weight is to be given to an interpretation so disputed. Let him, however, remember, that the question is not, whether

in all probability followed Dr. Doddridge—perhaps, (but I have not the means of ascertaining) Dr. Doddridge followed Mr. Fleming, without enquiring on what authority the persecution of Domitian is said to have lasted *ten years*. It may be 'recorded' somewhere, but certainly it is not in any history which I have met with; and, indeed, it is so notorious that Domitian's persecution did not begin until quite the latter part of his reign (probably not until the very last year of it), and that it was put a stop to on his death, that it would be a waste of time to cite authorities on the subject. It is of little consequence to the present enquiry, to what persecution the prophecy was intended to apply; but it is important to shew how the facts of history have been accommodated, and how error is perpetuated by those, who cannot for a moment be suspected of intending to deceive. Since the above note was written, I see that Mr. Irving speaks of the "ten years' persecution under Domitian, which is threatened upon the Church of Smyrna, under the name of 'ten days' tribulation.'"—Vol. I. p. 178.

¹⁰ It may be added, as somewhat singular, that among all the various opinions collected in Poole's Synopsis, the persecution of Diocletian is not mentioned.

one persecution, or another, is referred to; neither is it whether these apocalyptic *days*, may or may not, be *years*; but, whether the apostle does so *clearly* and *certainly* use the word *day*, for a *definite period of a year*, in *this* passage, as to form a *sufficient*, though a *single* warrant, for our assuming that he has done so in other places.

Mr. Faber's second argument is as follows:

II. "In this mode of reckoning, we are supported by the express warrant of scripture—'your children,' says Jehovah to the rebellious house of Israel, 'shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.' (Num. xiv. 33, 34). In a similar manner, God addresses the prophet Ezekiel: 'Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it, according to the number of the days thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the days¹¹ of their iniquity, according to the number of the days 390 days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. (Ez. iv. 4, 5, 6.)"

I am quite at a loss to understand how these passages, where the expression in each case is "a day

¹¹ For "days" read "years." Not doubting that this is an error of the press, or the pen, I should alter it without notice, but from the fear that some reader might turn to Mr. Faber's work, and suspect me of unfair dealing.

for a year"—where, in fact, it is declared and explained, that a certain number of *natural days* were appointed to represent, or prefigure, the like number of *natural years*,—should be called an "express warrant" for the mode of reckoning which translates the word יום *day* by the English word *year*. In Numbers, and in Ezekiel, the phrase is יום לשנה יום לשנה "a day for a year, a day for a year," a mode of expression which leaves no doubt of the writer's meaning, and which absolutely requires יום and שנה to be taken in their literal sense for *natural* days and years. It seems to me, that the phrase could only be considered as affording an "express warrant" for the translations which it is brought forward to support, if יום לשנה a "day for a year," had turned out to mean, when stripped of a mystical disguise, "one year for 360 years." That is to say, if the *days* during which the Israelites searched the land had been *natural years*, and the years which they were to wander, *prophetic years* as they are called, each consisting of 360 *natural years*;—or, that we learned from the scripture, that in obedience to this divine command, the prophet lay forty *years* on his side, and did so to prefigure a period of forty "*times*," each consisting of 360 years, the analogy would be good, and the warrant express; but what colour is here given to our interpreting יום or שנה, otherwise than literally?

Mr. Faber adds the following note;

"I am perfectly aware that a *year* is sometimes used by the prophets in its *literal* sense, as in Isaiah, vii. 8, xxiii. 17;

Jer. xxv. 11, 12, and even by Daniel himself, when predicting the punishment of the individual Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 25): but this does not affect the question, whether we are not warranted by scripture sometimes to understand *years* by *days*. The question is not, whether *days* are *always* used by the prophets in the sense of *years*, but whether they are not avowedly used so *sometimes*."

I do not know whether I fully understand this note, for I am not aware that any one has ever suggested that "a year" is used otherwise than literally, by any prophet, or other writer, except in the single passage of Daniel relating to the three times and a half; and to suppose, that in the passages here cited by Mr. Faber it is not to be taken in its literal sense, would (as I have already said) require us to translate it by 360 years. Natural days may typify or prefigure natural years: that which we express by *יום* *day*, may prefigure that which we express by *שנה* *year*: but that is very different from putting the word *יום* for the word *שנה* and seems to me to be no warrant for such a substitution.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no passage in the Scripture where "day," or "month," or "year," put simply, and without explanation, is "avowedly" used to denote (i. e. to *express* as a *name*, not to *prefigure* as a *type*) any period of time, except that which the word literally signifies; and I think the reader will agree with me, that until some such passages are adduced, we cannot confidently assert that we have the "express warrant of scripture" for mystically in-

terpreting the plain words of Daniel and St. John.¹²

Mr. Faber's third argument is as follows:

III. "That the 1260 *days* must mean *years*, is further evident from the nature of the circumstances ascribed to them. *The little horn* of Daniel's fourth beast is to acquire and exercise an unlimited dominion of some kind or other within the precincts of the Roman Empire, to wear out the *saints* of the Most High, and to change times and laws; *the apocalyptic ten-horned beast*, in his revived state, is to make war with the *saints* and overcome them, and to obtain power over all kindreds and tongues and nations: *the apocalyptic two-horned beast*, the contemporary and coadjutor of the *ten-horned beast*, is to cause the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the *first beast*, to set up an image for all men to worship, and to obtain such a degree of power as to be able to lay every person under an interdict who should refuse to comply with his terms of communion; and the *apocalyptic harlot*, who rides the *ten-horned beast*, is to extend her influence over peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues, to commit fornication with the kings of the earth, to intoxicate the inhabitants of the earth with the wine of her fornication, and herself to become drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs. Is it possible that all these things could be done in the short space of *three natural years and a half*? This will appear perhaps yet more evidently, if we attend to the subdivisions of this period. Towards the close of the 1260 *days* the *beast* is to slay the *witnesses*; and

¹² I am surprised that Amos, iv. 4, has not been quoted by any writer that I have seen, in support of the mystical interpretation of the 1260 days. While this is the case, there is no need to say any thing respecting it, and I only mention it that I may not appear to suppress a passage, which, as far as I can see, is as much to the purpose as any one that is brought forward.

their dead bodies are to lie unburied in the forum of the great city, *three days and a half*, after which they are to come to life again. In the course of these *three days and a half*, they that dwell upon the earth are to rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another—surely the inhabitants of the earth could not do all this in the very short space of only *three natural days and a half*. So again, a short time before the destruction of *the beast*, and therefore when *the 1260 days* are drawing near to their termination, three unclean spirits go forth to gather together unto the battle of the great day of God Almighty, the kings of the earth, even of the whole Ecumenè, or *Roman world*. They are accordingly gathered together to *Armageddon*, where they are afterwards completely routed. Now, if all this gathering together is to take place towards the *close of the 1260 days*, it is plain that we can allot to it no greater space than that of *a few days*. But, if *mere natural days* be intended, how can such a general gathering together as this be effected in the course of *a few days*. Since then we have the authority of Scripture for sometimes understanding *a day* to mean *a year*; and since the reason of the thing requires us so to understand *each day* of *the 1260 days*, we are not only warranted, but compelled, to consider *the 1260 days* as *1260 years*."

Before I say anything of the circumstances here alluded to, and by which the prophecy has been, or is to be, fulfilled, I must state, that of all the predictions which it contains, there is none more clear, perhaps I might even say, none, so clear, intelligible, and unequivocal, as the limitation of the time, during which the events predicted are to take place. The period is distinctly and repeatedly expressed in terms well known, and with respect to the literal meaning of

which, we cannot have a moment's hesitation. It stands in Hebrew, and in Greek, under the different denominations of days, months, and years, and I beg the reader to consider, whether we have a right to depart from the literal sense of these words, unless we can produce some clear, unequivocal, precedent; some passages in which these terms, or at least some or one of them, has been clearly used to express a period different from that which is designated by it, in its literal sense. With this view I cannot but think that we should be very confident of our interpretation of other parts of the prophecy, before we venture upon so bold a measure as to alter the plain words of Scripture. It is not, however, my intention here to enquire into the circumstances by which the prophecy is to be fulfilled. I am content to take them as they stand in the foregoing abstract, which, for the sake of argument, I am willing to suppose perfectly correct; and I request the reader to consider, whether it is IMPOSSIBLE that they should take place in three years and a half.

Setting aside the plain declarations of Scripture as to the time to be employed, and the extraordinary *means* to be used in the fulfilment of these predictions, surely what we have seen in the political convulsions of Europe during the last thirty years, may enable us to believe it not *impossible* that a power should arise, and "acquire, and exercise, an unlimited dominion, of some kind or other, within the precincts 'of the Roman Empire,'" and do all that we can

certainly understand to be predicted of him, in the course of three years and a half. I confidently refer the case to the deliberate consideration of the reader.

I wish, however, to remark, more particularly, on the slaying of the witnesses, because that will probably appear to many, the strongest part of the argument. "Surely," says Mr. Faber, "the inhabitants of the earth *could not do all this*, in the very short space of 'only three natural days and a half.'" But, what is "ALL THIS" which it is supposed that the inhabitants of the earth cannot possibly do in three natural days and a half? When the witnesses have been slain, "they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them; and make merry, and shall send gifts one to 'another.'" This is all that I find written respecting those "that dwell on the earth:" and let us take it in its utmost latitude, and suppose it to include all the inhabitants of the whole world. Would any unbiassed reader understand more by it, than that the inhabitants of the world should rejoice and make merry, as the spreading news should reach them? There is nothing, I think, in the common rules by which we understand what is written, to lead us even to surmise, that the writer of the Apocalypse meant us to understand that "they that dwell upon the earth" shall rejoice over the fall of the witnesses, *precisely* and *only* during the period in which they actually lie dead. Let us suppose a case, which may perhaps have sufficient analogy to explain my meaning. Let us imagine some English historian to have

stated, that after a long war, "*all the subjects of Great Britain* rejoiced and made merry on the restoration of peace." Would it be reasonable to argue, that the peace must have lasted until the British subjects in India were acquainted with the fact? If the peace lasted only a few days, it might be celebrated by the inhabitants of Calcutta long after the renewal of hostilities; yet this would not be considered as falsifying the statement of the historian, because no one would have supposed that his language implied any thing respecting the duration of peace.

Should the reader turn to the 11th chapter of the Revelation to look at the passage already mentioned, he will probably observe the 9th verse also; and therefore, although it is not mentioned in the argument, I will say a few words respecting it. It is there declared that "they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies." The original (*ἐκ τῶν λαῶν*) leads us to understand only individuals belonging to these different kindreds and nations;¹³ and, if we consider that the witnesses are slain by the beast, to whom power is given "over all kindreds and tongues and nations," (xii. 7) we might naturally expect that such spectators would be present.

As it regards the three unclean spirits,¹⁴ it does not

¹³ Dr. Hales, who supposes that a slaying of the witnesses will hereafter take place in London, says, "from her boundless commerce 'spectators' cannot be wanting 'of peoples, and tribes, and languages, and nations,' from the four quarters of the globe.—*Analysis*, II. 1362.

¹⁴ Rev. xvi. 14.

appear necessary to say much. I think the reader will scarcely require (and, to speak frankly, I should hardly know how to set about) a serious refutation of an argument built upon the *length of time* which it *must* take "spirits of devils, working miracles," to execute a commission which we cannot pretend fully to understand.

Looking, then, at the argument in general, I can only say, that I see no *impossibility* involved in the supposition, that the prophecy may receive its accomplishment in three years and a half; and, that even if it *appeared* otherwise, I should be very unwilling to admit such a supposed impossibility, as a sufficient warrant for changing the usual import of common and well understood words.

I wish the reader seriously to consider, whether a departure from the plain meaning of words, on the ground that their literal fulfilment is *impossible*, is not highly dangerous. What is the character of the prophecies hitherto fulfilled? Let us take Bishop Hurd's remarks on our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. "Was it *likely* that Judæa, at that time a Roman province, should be thus desolated by its own masters? Was it to be *presumed*, that so small a province should dare to engage in a formal contest with Rome, the mistress of the world, as well as of Judea? With Rome, then, in the zenith of her power, and irresistible to all nations? Was it *conceivable*, if any future distraction of that mighty empire should tempt the Jews to oppose

'their feeble efforts to its high fortune, that a vengeance so signal, so complete, should be taken upon them? that nothing less than a total *extermination* should be proposed, and effected? The ruin of the temple at Jerusalem was to be so entire, that *one stone should not be left upon another*. Allow for the exaggerated terms of a prophetic description; still, was it *imaginable* that the Romans should, in any proper sense of the words, execute this denunciation? Was it *their* way, as it was afterwards that of the Goths, to wage war with *stones*? Was it a principle with *them* to beat down the *pride* of buildings, as well as of *men*? Would even their policy or their pride, have suffered them to blot out an ancient, a renowned, an illustrious, temple, the chief ornament of their province, the glory of the east, and the trophy of their own conquests?"¹⁵

Yet we know that it was fulfilled—and, to advert to only one other prophecy;—what is there in the whole writings of Daniel and St. John which equals in apparent impossibility the simple, brief, and unexplained prediction of Isaiah, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a child." Surely if these words, instead of standing (as thanks be to God they do) among those fulfilled prophecies, which form a support of christian faith and hope, were as yet unaccomplished, and only to be found in the Apocalypse, we should hear it asserted as confidently, (and I submit

¹⁵ Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies, p. 167.

to every unbiassed reader of the prophecies, more plausibly,) that some mystical interpretation *must* be adopted, and would be fully warranted, by the *impossibility* of the event predicted.

I cannot help feeling the truth of what Waterland says, though I wished he had expressed it in milder terms, "Most of the abuses with regard to the interpreting of the scripture, when traced up to their fountain head, will appear to have been owing to this, that some will fancy the plain and obvious sense unreasonable or absurd, when it really is not; and will thereupon obtrude their own surmises, conjectures, and prejudices, upon the word of God."¹⁶

Mr. Faber's fourth argument is as follows :

"The point seems to be finally decided by the specification of the period, *about which the 1260 days must commence.* Since Daniel's *ten-horned beast* is allowedly *the Roman empire*, his *putting forth ten horns* must, both agreeably to the analogy of prophecy, and to the explanation of the interpreting angel (compare Dan. viii. 8, and see vii. 24), denote *the rising up of ten kingdoms within the limits of that empire.* These ten kingdoms arose, as it is well known, in the *fourth and fifth centuries*, when the Roman empire was falling asunder in consequence of the attacks of the northern nations. Now *the gradual rise of a little horn*, into whose hand *the saints* are delivered, during the space of *the three times and a half*, or *the 1260 days*, is represented as synchronizing with *the rise of the ten kingdoms.* Daniel does not expressly teach us, *how soon* after the rise of *the ten kingdoms the 1260 days* commence: but it is most

¹⁶ Quoted in Bishop Van Mildert's Bampton Lectures, p. 404.

natural to suppose, that they commence *not very long* after; because, since this is the period of *the horn's* tyranny, of his speaking great words, of his changing times and laws, and of his exercising some peculiar kind of authority over the whole empire of *the beast*, if we suppose a very long intermediate time to elapse, we shall be obliged to suppose either *the quiescence of the horn* during that intermediate time, or *the total silence of a professedly chronological prophet* respecting his actions during that whole time. St. John, however, appears to supply the omission of Daniel. He tells us, that *the ten kings* are to receive their power in *one hour* or *apocalyptic season* with *the beast*,¹⁶ their number *ten* being completed in the course of that *season* during which *the Roman empire* was apostazizing into its former bestiality; and that they should give their power and strength unto *the beast*. Now the *Roman empire*, as we

¹⁶ Mr. Faber appears to have changed his opinion after this was written. In his third volume, published several years after the first, he says, "I was once erroneously led, by the ambiguity of our common English translation, to suppose the passage (Rev. xvii. 12) to mean, that the ten kings should receive power SYNCHRONICALLY WITH the Beast; whereas its plain import is, that the ten kings should receive power SYNCHRONICALLY indeed with *each other*, but IN CONJUNCTION WITH *the beast*." Vol. III. p. 255. The reader will bear this in mind when he reads the rest of the argument, which seems to me to be answered by it. He should also be informed, that by the word "hour" Mr. Faber understands either the "twenty-fourth part of a day, or a season of indeterminate length." See vol. II. p. 108. Thus when it is said of the witnesses (Rev. xi. 12), "they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And the SAME HOUR was there a great earthquake." The first of these events is supposed to have occurred in 1555, and the second is the French Revolution. If the word "hour" is so indefinite, I do not see how it is to prove synchronism.

shall hereafter see, continued gradually to relapse into idolatry in the course of the *fifth* and *sixth* centuries, until at length it completely revived, in its *bestial* capacity, or a second time became a *perfect living beast*, by giving the *saints* into the hand of the *little horn*, and by formally re-establishing under a new name its ancient demonolatry. Hence the times of the *revived beast*, in his capacity of a *beast*, and the times of the *little horn*, are said to be the same. (Dan. vii. 25; Rev. xiii. 5.) Since then the *beast* completely revived at the commencement of the 1260 days, since the kings (their number *ten* being completed) were to receive their power in the same apocalyptic season with his previous gradual revival as a *beast*, and since they were to devote that power to him for the purpose of upholding his bestial principles; it is plain, that the *beast* must have been reviving in the *same hour*, or *apocalyptic season*, with the ultimate division of the *Western empire* into ten kingdoms. But this apocalyptic season is that of the *fourth trumpet*; in the course of which the number of the ten kingdoms was completed, and during which the *beast* was gradually reviving by relapsing more and more into idolatry, until at length he resumed all his functions of bestial vitality at the first blast of the *fifth trumpet*.¹⁷ Thus it appears, since the 1260 days commenced when the *beast* was perfectly revived, and since he was gradually reviving in the *same apocalyptic season* with the completion of the number of the ten kingdoms, that they cannot have commenced very long after the subversion of the *Western Roman empire*. This being the case, though we may not be able quite *positively* to fix the *precise* era of their commencement, we may be absolutely sure that they *must* have com-

¹⁷ "It will afterwards be shewn, that the *beast* perfectly revived in the year 606, and 607; that is to say, at the era when the *fourth trumpet* ceased, and when the *fifth trumpet* commenced."

Note by Mr. Faber.

menced *many ages ago*. But, if they be no more than 1260 *natural days*, then they must likewise have *expired* many ages ago. And, if they have expired many ages ago, then the events, which are represented as synchronizing with their termination, must long since have taken place. But those events have *not yet* taken place: therefore the 1260 days cannot yet have expired. We know, however, that the 1260 days must long since have commenced. It follows, therefore, that they cannot be *natural days*: and if they be not *natural days*, then they must be *prophetic days*, or *real years*."

Although I have thought it right to give the argument at full length, it will be, I think, unnecessary to notice all the statements which it contains. It is obviously founded (like the preceding) on the assumption, that Mr. Faber's interpretation of other prophecies is correct.

But the reader will consider, that I am not contesting Mr. Faber's particular system, and it will be evident that his argument here rests simply on his own interpretation of the prophecies, and that it assumes a number of points which have been denied by other equally respectable writers. It is not in my power to decide between them, and it is not my purpose to attempt it; what I aim at in these pages is to call the attention of pious and learned christians to the subject, and to excite enquiry into the Scriptures themselves, and into the principles and modes of interpretation which have been adopted by commentators, rather than to refute or maintain any particular system.

With a view to this I would make one or two observations. In the first place, it is said, that the rise of the little horn "is represented as synchronizing with the rise of the ten kingdoms." This Mr. Faber repeatedly asserts in his third volume. Speaking of the early fathers, he says, "they would be *quite sure*, from the unequivocal language both of Daniel and St. John, that the Roman empire was destined to be split into ten kingdoms, and that SYNCHRONICALLY with this its division a small kingdom was to arise."¹⁹ "The fathers (as we have just seen) rightly judged that the eleventh horn would SYNCHRONIZE with the ten primary horns."²⁰ "Either Daniel was a false prophet because he foretold a circumstance which never came to pass; or a small kingdom, minutely corresponding in character with the little horn, *did* actually spring up SYNCHRONICALLY with the ten Gothic horns."²¹ I give these extracts as they are printed in Mr. Faber's work, and the reader will observe that this *synchronism* is a point of great importance.

Now to any plain reader of Daniel, I think it would seem, that the rise of the little horn is *not* represented as synchronizing with the rise of the ten kingdoms; for the beast had the ten horns when he was first seen (and, for any thing that appears, might have had them for any period of time) but the prophet witnessed the actual rise of the little horn.

I believe no one disputes that if the Roman em-

¹⁹ p. 240.

²⁰ p. 241.

²¹ p. 242.

pire was shewn to the prophet, it was not as it existed in his own day, or in any way that embraced the whole period of its duration, but as it would exist at some certain period in futurity. That period does not seem to me to be the period of division, but some period when the empire shall have been divided; or, in other words, some period *after* (and I cannot conceive whence we are to gather *how long after*) the beast has become ten-horned. I do not see, therefore, how those who maintain that this "monarchy still subsists in the toes or kingdoms into which it was broken,"²² can deny that the eleventh horn may yet arise. It seems to me, that *any* period, shewing the Roman empire in a state of division into ten kingdoms, might be the period intended; and, that even if it could be clearly and satisfactorily shewn, that the Roman empire has once been divided into ten kingdoms, yet we should not be thereby warranted in deciding that the prophecy must have been *then* fulfilled, unless we could also prove that the empire *is not now*, and never can be *hereafter*, in that state of division.²³

I shall freely confess, however, that the account generally given of the division of the Roman empire is, to my own mind, very unsatisfactory.

²² Scott's Comm. on Dan. ii. 10.

²³ "Though the number of kingdoms has varied from time to time, yet it has been remarked by Daubuz: 'As if the number ten had been fatal in the Roman dominions, it has been taken notice of on particular occasions; as about 1240, by Eberhard, Bishop of

In the first place, this argument assumes, that by THE ROMAN EMPIRE we are to understand the Western Empire *only*. This would, perhaps, surprise an unprepared reader, who would probably (and, I think, not unreasonably), expect to find that the Roman empire, in the fourth and fifth centuries, included Constantinople. Bishop Newton, however, will tell him, that if he has a mind to have them, he "must look for the ten kings, or kingdoms, where only they can be found, amid the broken pieces of the Roman empire."²⁴ And he afterwards²⁵ recites, and adopts, Sir Isaac Newton's mode of excluding the Eastern part of the Roman empire, by a scheme which Mr. Faber asserts "must be erroneous."²⁶ On the other hand, Mede includes the Eastern empire²⁷ And the author of an elaborate article in the British Review (a man whose talents and piety might have borne comparison

²⁴ Vol. I. p. 460.

²⁵ *Ib.* p. 473.

²⁶ Vol. II. p. 235.

²⁷ Works, p. 661.

Saltzburgh, in the Diet at Ratisbon. At the time of the Reformation they were also ten.* 'As the number of kingdoms,' says Mr. Whiston, 'into which the Roman empire in Europe, agreeably to the ancient prophecies, was originally divided, A.D. 456, was exactly ten; so it is also very nearly returned again to the same condition, and at present is divided into ten grand or principal kingdoms or states.† It is remarkable, that at the present period also‡ the number of regal governments within the limits of the Western Roman empire is exactly ten.'—*Cunninghame on the Apocalypse*, 2d edit. p. 161.

* Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 52.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Viz., the year 1817.

with those of any writer on the subject) stated it as an "obvious fact, that the attempts to find ten kingdoms in the Western empire only, have produced nearly as many opposite opinions as there have been writers on the subject. All their difficulties have arisen from a principle which they in common assumed; and their endless disagreement demonstrates its incompatibility with the luminous tenor of divine prophecy."²⁸ Again, suppose we give up the Eastern empire, and look for the ten kingdoms "where only" (according to Bishop Newton) "they can be found;" what do we find? Mr. Faber, indeed says, "*these* kingdoms arose, as it is well known;" but *what* kingdoms are they? Whom shall we take for our guide? Shall we accept the list given us by Bishop Newton? According to Mr. Faber, "he most unwarrantably sets aside the *real* list of these kingdoms, and substitutes a list of his own, into which he introduces the petty states of Rome, and the Greek province of Ravenna, evidently *for no other purpose* than to give a colour of probability to his *pre-determined interpretation*." May we then assume that Mr. Faber's *real* list is undisputed? "It appears to me," says Mr. Frere, "that the only difference between Bishop Newton and Mr. Faber is, that Bishop Newton felt a stronger confidence that the three horns, which were plucked up before the papacy, were Ravenna, Lombardy, and Rome, than he did in the correctness of any of the proposed lists of the ten kingdoms; he

²⁸ British Review, vol. xviii. p. 405.

therefore made his list of the ten horns *bend* to his interpretation of the three horns: Mr. Faber, on the other hand, it appears, felt the most confidence in the interpretation of the ten original horns, as being those that have been named in his list; he therefore *forcibly accommodates* the interpretation of the three horns, so as to agree with his list of the ten kingdoms, and considering that the parts of the prophecy relating to the three horns are more particular and pointed than those relating to the ten horns, when spoken of altogether, (on which account we see, that though Mr. Mede, Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton *differ in their lists of the ten kingdoms*, they agree as to the three that were plucked up) the course pursued by Bishop Newton appears to me *more justifiable*,²⁹ and more likely to be attended with a successful result than that pursued by Mr. Faber. I wish, however, in no instance, to digress from the subject immediately before me, much less to pass any censures upon an author whose labours I so much respect as I do those of Mr. Faber; and my only object in bringing forward high contending authorities, is to point out what may be considered as debatable ground, within the range of which any commentator is at liberty to attempt the establishment of a new hypothesis.³⁰

The identity of these kingdoms is then still a dis-

²⁹ That is making "his list of the ten horns *bend* to his interpretation of the three horns."

³⁰ Combined View, 172.

puted point. To say nothing of Grotius and Brightman, who differ from each other in every point except the exclusion of *all* the Gothic kingdoms, let the reader only look at the various lists which have been made by learned men, and I think he will have no doubt that if the number mentioned by Daniel had been nine or eleven, the right number would have been found among these petty kingdoms, whose unsettled state renders it so easy to enumerate them variously. At all events, let him say whether those ten kingdoms are so well known, and the synchronical rise of the little horn, and the other particulars mentioned *so certain*, as finally to decide that we must interpret very plain and common words, in a manner certainly very unusual, and, I believe, unprecedented.

It would obviously fill a volume were I to go through every point alluded to in this argument. I think it, however, unnecessary; because those who are sufficiently acquainted with Mr. Faber's works to understand the line of reasoning at all, will be aware how much its force depends upon his system. That system in particular it is not my object to disprove; and if I use the author's name more frequently than that of any other writer, it is, as I have already said, because he has written most upon the subject. While I am obliged to speak of various writers, and to refer to their works, it would deeply grieve me should one word of this pamphlet give offence to any christian, and especially to those who are engaged in that study, which appears to me the best and the noblest in which

the human mind can be employed—the study of the word of God. I trust, however, that I have not written, and shall not write offensively, and I know that they who sincerely love truth will pardon some freedom in the search of it.

Having now taken some notice of the arguments, which I have seen produced, for departing from the literal sense in the passages referred to of Daniel and St. John, I submit them to the reader's deliberate judgment, and earnestly entreat his attention to another point which has greatly influenced my own mind.

WHATEVER difficulty there may be in understanding prophecy not yet fulfilled, I believe I only express the opinion of the christian world, in general, when I say, that we are warranted to hope that we may arrive at some tolerable understanding of those predictions which have long been accomplished.

Some of the soberest writers upon the subject go farther than this. Mr. Scott says, the prophecies of Scripture “constitute a grand system of *previous information* as to the designs of providence, extending from the earliest ages even to the consummation of all things; and accompanied by such distinct notations of order as may well be called the geography and chronology of prophecy; insomuch that *any one*, in *any age*, who well understood the prophecies extant in his day, might have known what to expect at the

specified times, and in the specified countries.”³¹ Mr. Cooper argues, that as it is “obviously the duty and interest” of all christians to attend to such indications, so it must be presumed, that it is in their power to understand them.”³²

But I do not ask so much as is here conceded; it is enough for my argument, that we may expect to understand *fulfilled* prophecy, and this, I believe, will be generally admitted. Bishop Horsley has said, “To attain the useful end of prophecy, which is to afford the highest proof of providence, it was necessary that prophecy should be delivered in such disguise as to be DARK while the event is remote, to CLEAR UP as it approaches, and to be rendered PERSPICUOUS by the accomplishment.”³³ “Commentators in general allow,” says Mr. Scott, “that this vial is not yet poured out: and this is a sufficient reason why a commentator should decline giving any conjecture in what manner so compendious, and so obscure a prediction will be fulfilled: *but when fulfilled it will cease to be obscure.*” “Predictions which are yet future, will in due course be so decidedly fulfilled, as to leave no ROOM FOR SCEPTICISM ITSELF TO FLUCTUATE IN SUSPENSE.”³⁴ “The predictions of this book,” says Mr. Gauntlett in his Exposition of the Revelation, “continue to receive their fulfilment during the lapse of ages; and as they are accomplished in their order,

³¹ Preface to Comm. on the Bible, p. xi.

³² Crisis, p. 3.

³³ Sermon xv. vol. II. p. 31.

³⁴ Zouch on Prophecy: cited Br. Crit. xvii. 76.

they are *decidedly* EXPLAINED and ILLUSTRATED, but not before."³⁵ "It is the universal character of the prophecies, that they are involved more or less in mystery and obscurity *previously* to their accomplishment, *after which* they become so LUCID AND PLAIN, that their fulfilment is universally admitted."³⁶ The same statement is made in terms even stronger by Mr. Frere: "When a commentator has translated the symbolical and figurative language of a prophecy, into plain and simple language, he has done all that is peculiarly his province; and there is no doubt (*if the interpretations be correct*) that when the events predicted *have actually occurred*, they will be so STRIKING, that NO ONE CAN easily fail in CORRECTLY applying them."³⁷

It is needless to add more testimonies on this point, and it is equally unnecessary to inform those who have carefully read any one of the leading works on the subject, that so far from being thus "LUCID AND PLAIN"—so far from the supposed fulfilment leaving "no room for scepticism itself to fluctuate in suspense"—the prophecies supposed to be fulfilled during the period of 1260 years, are the subjects of incessant dispute and controversy. Is it notorious, that even what is considered *fulfilled* prophecy (take for instance, great part of the Apocalypse) is thought so obscure, and a matter of so much controversy,³⁸ as to deter

³⁵ Preface, p. xxiii.

³⁶ p. 160.

³⁷ Combined View, p. 110.

³⁸ We hear alternately of the *clearness* and the *obscurity*, of

christians in general from attempting to understand it? In fact, the difficulty cannot be concealed, when men of piety, learning, and industry, are openly engaged in overthrowing each others systems; and when such men cannot agree, and christians in general do not pretend to give an opinion, *how*, or *when*, or even, in some cases, *whether* a prophecy has been accomplished, we seem naturally led to the conclusion that it still remains unfulfilled. Mr. Faber, indeed, says, "The real fact is, that with the exception of Grotius and Hammond, and one or two who have followed them, *there is NO DISCREPANCY among protestant expositors WITH REGARD TO THE GREAT OUTLINES of prophetic interpretation.*"³⁹ It will be for the reader,

fulfilled prophecy; but it is not often that we find these contradictory ideas placed in close contact as they are by a writer in the British Critic, in a review of Mr. Faber's work on the prophecies relative to Judah and Israel. "When we find *so much* EMBARRASSMENT, and such CONTRARIETY OF OPINION in the application of many prophecies *confessedly fulfilled*, what difficulties may we not expect to contend with in predictions whose event is the womb of time. It is in the nature of *unfulfilled* prophecy to appear fraught with contradiction, which human sagacity will labour in vain to reconcile, till the time when the event predicted shall UNRAVEL ALL PERPLEXITIES, and establish the inspiration of the prophet."—*Vol. xxxvi. p. 471.*

³⁹ I print this passage as it stands in Mr. Faber's third volume, page 295; but as he is there in controversy with a Roman Catholic, I am not certain how far he means the position to extend. He may, perhaps, mean it only to apply to the predictions respecting the papacy; but how he could intend it to be understood, even on that point, I do not perceive, when he had said, only twenty pages before, "I do not suppose the Pope to be Antichrist; a *real* protestant

however, to judge whether the matters adduced are merely subordinate particulars. If they are, I freely admit, that they form no objection to the reception of systems in which they occur; and in which they are only such imperfections as necessarily attend all the works of man.

Let us then enquire, what agreement exists among expositors as to the "general outline" of the Apocalypse. If it would be unfair to exact a precise conformity respecting the minute details of the Seals and Trumpets—if it would be too much to expect perfect agreement as to all the lesser circumstances even of that which has been fulfilled—yet, might we not expect agreement if we should ask, when, and how (not on what day, but in what century, and by what sort of facts,) was the prediction connected with any given Seal, fulfilled? Suppose, for instance, we should ask what was the period of the fourth seal, from three writers, whose piety, learning, and industry, have justly, and even necessarily, placed them high in the public estimation. Mr. Faber would refer us to some period *prior* to the year A. D. 325; Mr. Frere would answer that it began A. D. 536; and Mr. Cuninghame

'novelty, peculiar, I believe, to Bishop Horsley and myself.' Bishop Newton, who may be supposed to have seen enough of the expositors of prophecy, to know whether they agreed or not, makes a very different statement. In his Dissertation on Daniel's Vision of the Four Empires, he says, "to recite all the various opinions of commentators, would be but heaping up a monument of the absurdities of former ages."—*Diss. xiv. vol. i. p. 433.*

would tell us, that it began in the thirteenth, and ended in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Let the reader compare the different views which these expositors have given of the Seals and Trumpets, as they stand in the following table; and let him say, whether they agree in the "general outline."

	FABER.	CUNINGHAME.	FRERE.
1 Seal	.....	The greater part of the first 3 centuries.	312 — 337
2 .....	.....	Chiefly 4th and 5th centuries.	383 — 595
3 .....	.....	A very long period, commencing in the 5th century.	400 — 423
4	Refer to a period prior to A. D. 323.	13th to the latter part of the 17th century.	533 — 544
5 .....	.....	Explanatory of the preceding seals.	Begins and ends about 628.
6 .....	.....	Begins 10th August, 1792, and continues to the millennium.	1789 to 10th Aug. 1792.
7	Begins 323. Ends 1941.	Includes the trumpets.	26th Aug. 1792 to 1822-3.

This table is formed from two which are given in Mr. Frere's Combined View; one of which contains his own system, and the other, those of Mr. Faber and Mr. Cuninghame.

Looking at the discordant opinions which this table exhibits, I must say, that they do not appear to be trifling differences about subordinate matters of detail; of this, however, let the reader judge.

Again, suppose we should refer to the prophecy respecting the Witnesses, and enquire "Have they been slain, or is that event still future?" we are answered, that it is future, by "many writers of great judgment and eminence, among whom may be enumerated Archbishop Ussher, Bishops Newton and Horsley, Archdeacon Woodhouse, Dr. Gill, Mr. Scott, and many others." I copy this from Mr. Gauntlett's exposition of Rev. xi. 7-12;⁴⁰ from which also I may add that, "some writers suppose that the *slaying, rising, and ascending* of the witnesses, refer to the constant and alternate persecutions, and triumphs of the confessors of Christ, during the whole period of twelve hundred and sixty years." "Another class of interpreters are of opinion, that this prophecy received its completion in the case of John Huss and Jerome of Prague." "Others refer its accomplishment to the popish persecution in England in bloody Mary's reign about the year 1553. Some to the massacre of the protestants in France in 1572, and others to the cruelty exercised on the Waldenses in Piedmont, under the

⁴⁰ If the reader wishes for more specific reference to the authors who have severally maintained these opinions, let him consult Bishop Newton on the passage.

'Duke of Savoy, A. D. 1685."....."The next hypothesis is supported by many eminent writers, among which, are Messrs. Faber, Cuninghame, Holmes, and Fuller, with Dr. Bryce Johnston, and others.—These commentators confidently suppose, that the prophecy of the death and resurrection of the witnesses received its accomplishment in the suppression of protestantism in Germany, A.D. 1548. And its restoration about three years and a half afterward, A. D. 1551." To these various and conflicting opinions, more might be added. Indeed Mr. Irving, the latest writer whose work I have seen, following Brightman⁴¹ and several other commentators,⁴²

⁴¹ It is not worth while to enter into all the subdivisions, which exist even among those writers who are classed together; but it is curious to see how little agreement there is even among those of whom it may be said, that they do not absolutely differ in the general outline. Of course Brightman did not apply this prophecy as Mr. Irving does, to the impieties of the French Revolution; on the contrary, opposing the opinion of the fathers, he says, "we that have seen the matter long since accomplished, may determine for a CERTAINTY that the Holy Ghost had another manner of meaning than this," and then proceeds to state his own opinion, that the two witnesses were the "*Holy Scriptures*" and "*the assemblies of the Saints*." If I understand him, (and I am by no means confident that I do) these two witnesses were not slain at the same time, but "sentence of death was passed against the Scriptures in the year 1546, April 8th," and they remained dead until 9th November, 1549, and the Church "lay for dead from the 22. of April the year 1547, unto the calends of Octob. of the year 1550." It is somewhat singular that the periods here fixed for the *revival of the witnesses, both*

⁴² See Poole's Synopsis in 1.

sets them all aside, and says, "in the very first face 'and shewing of the thing, if God hath two witnesses 'upon the earth, the Old and New Testament are 'they.'"

Surely it will not be contended, that the slaying of the witnesses is a small and subordinate matter. Every expositor has treated the prediction as one of great importance, and has brought forward the facts in which he supposed it to be fulfilled, as matters of much consequence to the church; neither can it be said, that the discrepancy of opinion is small.

But, if we can persuade ourselves, that the prophecy of the witnesses is one of those subordinate matters, in which we are not to expect agreement among expositors; how can we possibly bring ourselves to the same view of a fact, which must be allowed to be of awful and intense interest to the church of God? I mean, the delivery of that church into the hands of a blasphemous and persecuting power. If such an event as this has taken place, is it possible that the church of God can be at a loss to decide *when* and *how* it happened? Can there be a difference of opinion among pious, and learned, and

fall within the time during which the preceding class of commentators consider the witnesses as *lying actually dead*. Surely the coincidence between the History and the Prophecy cannot be very striking, if both these opinions are in *any degree plausible*, which I cannot but suppose they are, when I find Mr. Faber stating, (vol. II. p. 78) that he once agreed with the second part of Brightman's opinion.

laborious enquirers into the word of God, and the history of the church? Nay, farther, if we ask, "is the church at this moment in the hands of the blasphemous little horn, or is it not?" Mr. Faber and many more assert that it is; while Mr. Cuninghame, Mr. Frere, and others are as fully convinced that it is not; and nine-tenths of the christian world stand silent, avowedly unable to give any opinion on the subject. They themselves may, or may not, be in the hands of the little horn, and he may, or may not, be wearing them out, for any thing they know—they hope and believe that they are the christian church, and therefore "the saints;" but whether the beast is making war with, and has overcome, them, they cannot tell—it is a deep, curious, and litigated question, and one on which, among so many conflicting opinions, they never pretend to form a judgment for themselves.

Let us revert to the statement with which we set out. Is it true, as Mr. Scott affirms, that by means of a "grand system of previous information as to the designs of providence," "ANY ONE IN ANY AGE, who well understood the prophecies extant in his day, might have known what to expect in the specified times, and in the specified countries?" And *did* the church expect its delivery into the hands of the little horn? No. When did the saints find out that they had been delivered over? Not for ages. Is this credible? But in fact when did it happen? When, how, and by whom was this great prediction fulfilled? On

this point, too, there is a great difference of opinion. Surely it is not sufficient to say, that we know *about* what time the 1260 years must have begun. In the first place, allowing it all reasonable latitude, that phrase is not sufficient to comprehend the centuries by which expositors have differed; and in the second, let it ever be remembered, that we are not speaking of a merely chronological difference. We are not enquiring in what year certain historical facts took place—but in what year (that is by what *facts*) a prediction was fulfilled. If, then, the difference between expositors were only one year, yet if the places, persons, and historical circumstances generally, were changed by that difference of time, the variation would be total. Thus at least it appears to me. If, for instance, one writer should say, “the saints were given into the hands of the little horn by the edict of Justinian in the year 533;” and another should reply, “I agree with you that they were delivered by that edict; but it was not issued until the year 606:” the difference between them would be purely chronological, and it would be unfair to represent them as differing respecting the fulfilment of the prophecy. But if, (as Mr. Faber might reply to Messrs. Frere and Cuninghame) he should answer, “The saints were not delivered into the hands of the little horn by the edict of Justinian in the year 533—they were as free after it as before it—Justinian and his edict had nothing whatever to do with the fulfilment of the prophecy—it was not fulfilled until he and his generation had passed

away;”—and if it were (as in this case it might be) rejoined, that the Emperor Phocas and the Pope of the year 606 could have nothing to do with the fulfilment of a prophecy which had been accomplished more than seventy years—it seems to me, that there would not be merely a chronological difference of a few years, but an entirely different application of the prophecy to history.⁴³

Nor are these two the only periods which have been fixed upon. This momentous event, according to Mede,⁴⁴ took place in A. D. 456; according to Mr.

⁴³ Thus Mr. Faber says in reply to Mr. Bicheno “If the 1260 years be computed from the year 534, they carry us beyond the year 1789; and an error of five years *as effectually invalidates a numerical calculation* as an error of five centuries:.....what can an event which happened in the year 534, have to do with a date which is declared to be the year 529?” Vol. I. p. 309

⁴⁴ It may be objected, that the 1260 years of Mede have long since elapsed; but in order to our forming a right judgment, it is absolutely necessary to take into consideration those hypotheses which have been refuted by time. The weight of any writer's opinion as to the events which seemed most clearly to accomplish the prediction, and fix the time when the saints were delivered into the hands of the little horn, cannot be diminished by the failure of his hypotheses. It will not be doubted, that the history of all the periods fixed on by others was well known to Mede, and there was nothing to prevent him from chusing any one of them, except that he did not discern among them all, such a fulfilment as he thought that he discovered in the events of the year 456.

His authority, then, whatever it may be, *as to the accordance of historical facts in 456 with the language of prophecy*, remains undiminished by the lapse of the 1260 years, because though time may

Frere in A. D. 533, when the edict of Justinian was published; the anonymous author of a system, characterized by Dr. Hale as, "perhaps, the most ingenious of its class,"⁴⁵ places it A. D. 583; Mr. Faber, as I have already stated, begins from the year 606; Dr. Hales⁴⁶ reckons from A. D. 620; Bishop Newton from A. D. 727; and Lowman from A. D. 756.

I cannot help again expressing my astonishment at the supposed state of the Church of God. Is it credible, that she has to wander up and down through a period of nearly three centuries, enquiring when she was delivered into the hand of a cruel and blasphemous tyrant? Are the saints of the Most High so ignorant, not only of their destiny, but of their history, as that they know not when, how, or by whom, this tremendous prediction was executed? The delivery of the saints into the hand of their persecutor was surely a solemn act. "We may," says Mr. Faber, "naturally conclude, that they were given into his hand, both by some formal deed, and some specific person."⁴⁷

And might we not expect that this solemn act of her delivery, would be known in her assemblies—

have shewn his opinion to be erroneous, yet it cannot be denied, that all the facts of history lay before him, and that he decided on those which occurred at that period, as best agreeing with the terms of the prophecy. It is obvious that these remarks apply equally to Whiston and other writers, whose systems have been refuted by time.

⁴⁵ Analysis, vol. II. p. 1358.

⁴⁶ Ib. p. 566.

⁴⁷ Vol. I. p. 189.

registered in her calendar—commemorated in her services—never, never lost sight of by her members? But instead of this, the saints who were thus delivered up knew nothing of the matter. One generation after another passed away, and the secret was not discovered. Centuries rolled on, and the saints knew not, that he to whom they looked as their father, and their head, was making war upon them, and wearing them out. For ages did the church of God quietly follow a hireling, with the brand of perdition on their foreheads. Was there no servant of Christ who "understood the prophecies extant in his days," sufficiently to warn his brethren?—did no eye fall upon the tremendous curse, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and WHOSOEVER RECEIVETH THE MARK OF HIS NAME?"

Mr. Faber says "the testimony of those who lived before the reformation is peculiarly valuable and curious. Much of this has been collected by Bishop Newton in his excellent deduction of the line of the witnesses through the entire period of the dark ages."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Vol. III. p. 295.

He appears to have followed the Bishop implicitly, and therefore, I wish, before I make any remarks on the testimony which has been collected, to express my full conviction, that Mr. Faber's only fault in this matter has been, that he inconsiderately followed one whom he believed capable of such conduct as he has, on another occasion, charged upon that writer.⁴⁹

But taking this testimony as it stands in Mr. Faber's abstract, what does it amount to? "Gerbert, Archbishop of Rheims in the year 991," (that is, 385 years after the time when, on Mr. Faber's hypothesis, the saints were delivered into the hand of the little horn,) "spoke of the reigning Pope John XV. in the following remarkable terms: 'What do you conceive this man, sitting on a lofty throne, glittering in purple clothing and in gold; what, I say, do you conceive him to be? If he is destitute of charity, and puffed up by knowledge alone, he is Antichrist, *sitting in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God.*' in other words, he is *St. Paul's Man of Sin.*" Supposing these words to belong to Gerbert, it may be sufficient to observe, that if by Antichrist he meant John XV. *individually*, his speech is nothing to our purpose; if he meant to apply the title to him *as Pope*, or to *the Papacy*, the value of his testimony may be estimated from the fact, that he afterwards became Pope himself. If, however, they are his words, (and they may be, for he is said to have collected the

⁴⁹ See before, page 33.

acts⁵⁰ of that Council which were not known to the world until the Centuriators of Magdeburgh published them from an accurate copy which they had fortunately by them,⁵¹—if I say, the words are Gerbert's, he has put them in the mouth of Arnold, Bishop of Orleans; and even if they were ever spoken, and spoken of the Pope, I think they will by no means convince the reader, that he who uttered them seriously believed the Pope, *as such*, to be Antichrist, though he might, in the heat of declamation, apply that title to him, or to any ecclesiastic "*if destitute of charity, and puffed up by knowledge ALONE.*"

Such as it was, however, it is not pretended that this testimony was listened to, or that any one else repeated it, during more than a century; and then, says Mr. Faber, "In like manner, Fluentius Bishop of Florence taught publicly that Antichrist was born and come into the world, for which he was severely reprimanded by the Pope, in the year 1105, and strictly forbidden to preach any such doctrine." But in fact, though Fluentius preached the birth of Antichrist, did he mean to apply this title to the Pope, or to the Papacy? What is the evidence on which we are expected to believe, that this Bishop "publicly taught"

⁵⁰ That is the "*longe prolixiora acta*" as Cave calls them, which alone contain this speech.

⁵¹ They say "*cum autem hujus Synodi acta, in vetusto codice accurate conscripta, ad manum haberemus: visum est ea integra inserere; quia alias non extabant. Apparet autem, Gerbertum fuisse collectorem.*"—*Cent. x. p. 246.*

that his ecclesiastical superior was Antichrist? I have not been able to find any. The Magdeburgh Centuriators, indeed, set it down, that as he talked of Antichrist, he must, "no doubt" have meant the Pope.⁵² They were not so happy as to possess any "*acta prolixiora*" of the council which examined him, and those which exist throw no light on his sentiments.⁵³ They cite no writer to confirm their application of his words; nor do they pretend that there was any writer who so understood them; but they admit that there were writers who stated that he was led to say what he did by natural phenomena, such as the faithful of that age expected to precede the revelation of Antichrist.⁵⁴ These writers, however they conclude, were mistaken, and that "no doubt" he *must* have been led to form his opinion from the marks of Antichrist which were then visible in the Papacy. The reader will judge for himself; but I cannot believe without good evidence, (and I find none at all) that Paschal II. or any Pontiff of the twelfth century, would have been satisfied with "severely reprimanding" a Bishop

⁵² "Audebat palam asseverare, Antichristum jam natum esse, idque, HAUD-DUBIE animadvertit, ex illa horribili metamorphosi regni Christi, spiritualis in mundanum."—*Cent. XII. cap. ix. Col. 566.*

⁵³ Silentium autem de argumentis ipsius altum est.—*Ib.*

⁵⁴ Scribunt aliqui, prodigia, quæ plurima tum fiebant, majorem ipsi materiam cogitandi de Antichristo præbuisse: ut quod mare retrocesserit et similia. Verum SINE DUBIO gravioribus causis, certioribus notis et characteribus Antichristi, quæ publice in conspectu versabantur, motus est.—*Ib.*

who had "publicly taught" that *himself*, or *his office*, was Antichrist; though I can well understand that he might rebuke him for disturbing the peace of society, and forbid him to preach what he, most probably, considered not only false but mischievous.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ "Lord Cobham and the two Bohemian Martyrs," says Bishop Hurd, (*Introd. p. 241*) "were committed to the flames, for nothing so much, as for asserting the impious doctrine 'that the Pope was Antichrist.'" This may be believed, and is, indeed, what might have been expected; but what a sweet-tempered Pontiff must he have been, who contented himself with reprimanding a Bishop for having "publicly taught" this "impious doctrine," and then sent him back to his see, with a simple prohibition. Nor was Paschal II., according to Bishop Hurd, the only Pope whose christian meekness was thus tried and manifested. Leo. X. he tells us, "in the last Lateran Council, gave it in charge to all preachers, that none of them should presume to call the Pope, Antichrist, or to treat this obnoxious subject in their discourses to the people." (*Ibid. p. 242.*) This is a good round assertion; but it is not supported by the garbled citation at the foot of the page, which is as follows: "Mandantes omnibus, &c.—*tempus quoque præfixum futurorum malorum, vel ANTICHRISTI ADVENTUM—prædicare, vel asserere, nequaquam præsumant.* BIN. CONC. Lateran. V. sub Leone X. Sess. XI. p. 632." The absurdity of a statement which represents a Pope in council, as charging his clergy not to call him Antichrist, is apparent; and its falsehood would have been equally manifest if the Bishop had cited the whole passage. I subjoin it, printing in *italics* those words which are omitted by the Bishop. "Mandantes omnibus qui hoc onus sustinent, quique futurum sustinebunt ut Evangelicam veritatem, et sanctam scripturam juxta declarationem, interpretationem, et ampliationem doctorum, quos Ecclesia vel usus diuturnus approbavit, legendosque hactenus recepit, et in posterum recipiet, prædicint & explanent: nec quidquam ejus proprio sensui contrarium, aut dissonum adjicient, sed illis semper insistant, quæ ab ipsius sacræ scripturæ verbis, et

The only other witnesses, before the time of the Waldenses, are St. Bernard and Joachim of Calabria. The latter of these Mr. Faber states to have "asserted 'that Antichrist was already born in the city of Rome; 'that he would be advanced to the apostolic chair, 'and would be "*exalted above all that is called God or 'worshipped;*" the well known predicted characteristic 'of the Man of Sin." Joachim is not, perhaps, a person whose testimony would be called for, if evidence were not very scarce. But how does it appear that he meant to stigmatize the POPE, or the *papacy*, with the name of Antichrist? I conceive that he, like Fluentius, (and, as far as I know, every writer of his, or any preceding, age,) expected an individual Antichrist;⁵⁶ and knowing that

præfatorum doctorum interpretationibus, rite et sane intellectis, non discordant. Tempus quoque præfixum futurorum malorum, vel antichristi adventum aut certum diem judicii prædicare, vel asserere nequaquam præsumant, cum veritas dicat, Non esse vestrum nosse tempora vel momenta, quæ Pater posuit in sua potestate: ipsosque qui hactenus similia asserere ausi sunt, mentitos ac eorum causa, reliquorum etiam recte prædicantium auctoritati non modicum detractum fuisse constet." I do not know what edition the Bishop used; but in that of Paris, 1636, this passage stands vol. ix. p. 142.

⁵⁶ In a treatise of Bishop Horsley, on the Probetical Periods, published in the *British Magazine*, that prelate says, "Antichrist, according to the Fathers, is to consist of two branches—an eastern and a western." (Supp. 1833. Vol. IV. p. 740.) A statement so flatly in the face of what I believe to be the truth, would have surprised me, had I not seen how much the system is indebted to round assertions, supported by no authority whatever. I applied through the magazine (Aug. 1834, p. 164), to the gentleman who was thus publishing the Bishop's papers, to know if the Bishop gave, or he

when he should be revealed, he would be impiously exalted above all that was called God, or worshipped, he not unnaturally supposed that he would fulfil these predictions, by usurping the Pontifical Chair. What, however, were his real sentiments, I know not, for I have not the means of consulting authorities.⁵⁷

St. Bernard's works, however, I do possess, and to them I shall refer the reader; but, let me first ask, whether it has not struck him as a thing altogether incredible, that any man should have remained in

knew of, any authority; but I received no answer of any kind. I believe the statement to be entirely false, and merely one of those random assertions which, being thrown off by authors of name, are caught up and hackneyed by minor writers on the prophecies, and made the foundation of their various fancies. Taking the word Fathers in its utmost laxity, I shall be much surprised if any *one* can be found who held such an opinion as the Bishop states. To talk of its being generally held by them, is, I am convinced, quite false."

⁵⁷ Since this was written, I have looked into the story of the Abbot Joachim, and I hope sufficiently exposed the impudent absurdity of representing him as a witness against popery, or as having the least idea that the Pope was Antichrist; though he does seem to suppose that, in the height of his blasphemous impiety, Antichrist would take upon him to be Pope. I do not wish here to repeat what I have said in my reply to Mr. Digby, p. 64, &c., but I may mention that, since it was written I have met with the "*Liber Concordie novi ac veteris Testamenti*" ascribed to the Abbot, in which I find the Pope represented in a very different light—not as the Antichrist, but as the Archangel, of Daniel's prophecy. After quoting the words of Daniel, xii. 1, he distinctly says, "*Michael princeps populi Domini Romanus Pontifex est, qui ita manebit in discrimine, quomodo Mardocheus sub Aman. Aut sicut Judas Maccabeus in diebus Antiochi.*"

f. 132, b.

full communion with one whom he *really believed* to be ANTICHRIST? If such a man could be found, would his testimony weigh one feather, and should we not rather be ashamed to cite such a miscreant or madman? Surely we have talked about Antichrist, and the Man of Sin, until familiarity with the title has beguiled us of all right notion respecting the character, or we could never seriously argue at this rate. "*These witnesses*," says Mr. Faber, (that is, Gerbert or Arnold, Fluentius, Joachim and Bernard—all that can be cited until the twelfth century,) "*were in the very bosom of the Romish church.*" Yes—if their testimony is relevant to the point which it is brought forward to establish, they lived and died in full communion with one whom THEY BELIEVED to be THE MAN OF SIN—in professed allegiance to one whom THEY CONSIDERED and OPENLY DENOUNCED as ANTICHRIST—manfully fighting under the banner of THE SON OF PERDITION, and obeying him with humble duty as their SPIRITUAL HEAD. It is incredible—of Gerbert, Fluentius, and Joachim, indeed, we know comparatively little—but it is too much to ask us to believe this of St. Bernard. Ignorant on some points he might be—superstitious on many he certainly was—but it is shameful to drag forth a man of his glowing piety, as one who *knowingly* worshipped the Beast, and grasped the right hand of Antichrist. It is shameful to pervert his words, in order to make it appear as if he had wittingly leagued with the powers of Hell, and sold himself to the Son of Perdition.

And, after all, on what evidence are we required to believe this? Mr. Faber says, "St. Bernard himself, 'however devoted to the Romish church in *other respects*,⁵⁸ inveighed loudly against the corruption of 'the clergy, and the pride and tyranny of the Popes; 'saying that they were ministers of Christ, and yet 'served Antichrist, that nothing remained but that 'the Man of Sin should be revealed, and that the 'Beast in the Apocalypse occupied St. Peter's chair."

I repeat, that I fully acquit Mr. Faber of intentional misrepresentation, and that I do not mean the expressions which I have used to apply to him: I cannot, however, bring myself to qualify them, as it regards Bishop Hurd, because he professes to have examined into the matter. At the end of a note which I shall quote presently, he says, "I mention these things so particularly to shew, *what his sentiments on this head really were*; which have been misrepresented by hasty writers, who transcribe from each other, *without examining, themselves, the authorities they quote.*" What, then, does the Bishop give us as the *real sentiments* of St. Bernard? He tells us that, devoted as he was to the church of Rome, "he employed all the thunder 'of his rhetoric (in which faculty he excelled) against 'its corruptions; exclaiming that the ministers of 'Christ were become the servants of Antichrist; and

⁵⁸ This expression is used also by Bishops Hurd and Newton. He *only* "employed all the thunder of his rhetoric, in which faculty he excelled," in proclaiming that the Pope was Antichrist.

‘the Beast of the Apocalypse had seated himself in St. Peter’s chair.’ And on this passage he adds the following note:—

“MINISTRI CHRISTI SUNT ET SERVIUNT ANTICHRISTO. [*Serm. sup. Cantic. xxviii.*] It is true, by Antichrist he seems not to mean the Pope, but in general, an evil principle, which then domineered in the church. Yet he refers us to the famous passage in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, ch. ii. And he tells us in his 56th epistle, that he had heard one Norbert, a man of exemplary piety say, that Antichrist would be revealed in that age. Hence it seems probable that some one person or power was in his eye. After all, he says, that Norbert’s reasons did not satisfy him. Yet, in another epistle, he asserts expressly—*Bestia illa de Apocalypsi, cui datum est os loquens blasphemias, et bellum gerere cum sanctis, PETRI CATHEDRAM OCCUPAT, tanquam leo paratus ad prædam, (Ep. cxxv.)*; which was, in other words, to call the Pope Antichrist. It is evident that St. Bernard applied the prophecies in the Revelations to the successor of St. Peter.”⁵⁹

There is no doubt that the words first cited in this note, stand in one of St. Bernard’s Homilies; but, as the Bishop admits that they do not seem to mean that the Pope was Antichrist, it is unnecessary to say much on the subject. Here, as elsewhere, St. Bernard’s voice is raised with holy and fervent indignation against the corruption of the age, but it is false to insinuate that he called those of whom he spoke, “ministers of Antichrist,” because they were ministers of the Papacy, and it would never have been thought

⁵⁹ Introduction. Serm. vii. p. 234.

of by any unprejudiced writer.⁶⁰ As fairly might we charge a priest of the Church of England with high treason against his temporal Sovereign, if, in a torrent of invective, he should tell his parishioners, that they were subjects of the prince of darkness. “Yet,” says the Bishop, “he refers us to II. Thes. ii.” No doubt he does; but not as the Bishop would insinuate, in any way that should connect the Pope or the Papacy with that prediction. He says, indeed, after inveighing against the vices and luxuries, and the corruptions of his age, that nothing remained but that Antichrist should be revealed to seduce those who were yet abiding in Christ, and standing fast in the simplicity of the gospel, if any such were still left: a sufficient proof, if any were wanting, that he did not believe that Antichrist had been already revealed in the Papacy. This, indeed, appears from the next point stated by the Bishop. St. Bernard, he says, “tells us in his 56 epistle, that he had heard one Norbert, a man of exemplary piety, say, ‘that Antichrist would be revealed in that age!’ Hence it seems probable that

⁶⁰ Let the reader judge. “*Vae generationi huic a fermento Pharisaorum, quod est hypocrisis! si tamen hypocrisis dici debet, quæ jam latere præ abundantia non valet, et præ impudentia non quærit. Serpit hodie putida tabes per omne corpus Ecclesiæ et quo latius, eo desperatius; eoque periculosius, quo interius. Nam si insurgeret apertus inimicus hæreticus absconderet se forsitan ab eo. Nunc vero quem ejiciet aut a quo abscondet se? Omnes amici, et omnes inimici: omnes necessarii, et omnes adversarii: omnes domestici, et nulli pacifici: omnes proximi et omnes quæ sua sunt quaerunt. Ministri Christi sunt, et serviunt Antichristo.*”

'some one person or power was in his eye." Undoubtedly one person was in his eye—in conformity with the general opinion of his own and preceding ages, he expected an individual Antichrist, who should raise, "a general persecution of the church," and this is manifest from this very epistle; but the Bishop did not quote what relates to this point, feeling, I presume, that it would be rather too much to ask his readers to believe, that St. Bernard actually expected the Pope, or the Papacy, to raise "*a general persecution of the church.*"⁶¹

But the most disgraceful citation is that which follows: "YET," says the Bishop, (again insidiously connecting things which have no connection whatever,) in another epistle he asserts expressly—"Bestia illa de Apocalypsi, cui datum est os loquens blasphemias, et bellum gerere cum sanctis PETRI CATHEDRAM OCCUPAT, tanquam leo paratus ad prædam, Ep. cxxv.: which was, in other words, to call the Pope Antichrist." These are indeed the words of Bernard; but it seems impossible to suppose that Bishop Hurd was ignorant that by the "apocalyptic beast," St. Bernard meant, not the POPE, but the ANTIPOPE; and by the "saints"

⁶¹ "Verum de Antichristo cum inquirerem quid sentiret, durante adhuc ea, quæ nunc est, generatione revelandum illum esse se certissime scire protestatus est. At cum eamden certitudinem unde haberet, sciscitanti mihi exponere vellet; audito quod respondit, non me illud pro certo credere debere putavi. Ad summam tamen hoc asseruit, non visurum se mortem, nisi prius videat generalem in Ecclesia persecutionem." *Ep. lvi.*

with whom he made war, the POPE and his adherents. In fact, that the "LEO paratus ad prædam" was Peter Leo, who, having usurped the pontifical chair, under the title of Anacletus II., had driven Innocent II. from Rome. Against this usurper, Bernard's language is as unmeasured as his devotion to the Pope. He calls him the Man of Sin, the Apocalyptic Beast, and the abomination of desolation; but how does he speak of the Pope, *in the very letter* quoted by Bishop Hurd? It is addressed to Geoffrey of Loroux; its object is simply to stir him up to assist the exiled Pontiff, and he recites with exultation a list of the sovereigns who, with their clergy and subjects, adhered to Pope Innocent "AS CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHER, AS MEMBERS TO THE HEAD." In short, in the language of Bernard, (and I wish I could suppose the Bishop not to have known it) the POPE is the LORD'S ANOINTED—the POPE IS THE CHRIST, and the ANTIPOPE IS ANTICHRIST.⁶²

⁶² Tempus faciendi nunc, quia dissipaverunt legem. Bestia illa de Apocalypsi cui datum est os loquens blasphemias, et bellum gerere cum sanctis, Petri cathedram occupat, tanquam leo paratus ad prædam. Altera quoque bestia" [Gerardus Engolismensis] "juxta vos subibilat, sicut catulus habitans in abditis. Illa ferocior, ista callidior, pariter convenerunt in unum ADVERSUS DOMINUM, ET ADVERSUS CHRISTUM EJUS. Demus operam cito dirumpere vincula eorum, et projicere a nobis jugum ipsorum. Nos in nostris partibus, una cum aliis Dei servis divino igne accensis, Deo cooperante laboravimus in conveniendo populos in unum, et reges ad dirumpendum pravorum consensum, ad destruendam omnem altitudinem extollentem se adversus scientiam Dei. Nec infructuose. Alemanniæ, Franciæ, Angliæ, Scotiæ, Hispaniarum, et Jerosolymorum Reges, cum universo

Bishop Hurd might, perhaps, think that he was doing God service; but surely every honest man will look with scorn and indignation on such falsehood.

Clero et Populis, favent et adhaerent Domino Innocentio TANQUAM FILII PATRI, TANQUAM CAPITI MEMBRA, solliciti servare unitatem spiritus in vineulo pacis." Could Bishop Hurd have read this letter? or that which precedes it, and begins, "Ut verbis vos propheticiis alloquar, 'Consolatio abscondita est in oculis quia mors dividit inter fratres.' Quidam enim juxta Isaiam videntur foedus percussisse cum morte, et cum inferno fecisse pactum. Ecce namque CHRISTUS DOMINI ISTE INNOCENTIUS positus est in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum. Nam QUI DEI SUNT LIBENTER JUNGUNTUR EI: QUI AUTEM EX ADVERSO STAT AUT ANTICHRISTI EST, AUT ANTICHRISTUS. Cernitur abominatio stare in loco sancto, quem ut obtineret incendit ignis sanctuarium Dei. Persequitur Innocentium, et cum eo omnem innocentiam. Fugit ille nimirum a facie LEONIS &c."—Ep. exxiv. Again, when Innocent had fled to Pisa, Bernard thus wrote to the inhabitants: "Assumitur Pisa in locum Romæ et de cunctis urbibus terræ ad Apostolicæ Sedis culmen eligitur. Nec fortuito sive humano contigit istud consilio: sed cœlesti providentia, et Dei benigno favore fit, qui diligentes se diliget, qui dixit CHRISTO SUO INNOCENTIO, 'Pisam inhabita, et ego benedicens benedicam ei.'—Ep. cxxx. In his letter to the Bishops of Aquitaine against Gerard of Angouleme, (the person alluded to in the former letter as a second and more crafty beast,) he says of Anacletus. "Quis vero ille, nisi HOMO PECCATI, qui super electum a catholicis catholicum, et canonice, locum sanctum invasit, quem tamen, non quia sanctus, sed quia summus est, affectavit?"—Ep. cxvii. Bernard's idea of what the Bishop of Rome was, as to his office, and ought to be, as to his character, may be gathered from his telling his own son, in the faith Pope Eugenius III., that he ought to be *malleum tyrannorum, regum patrem, legum moderatorem, canonum dispensatorem, sal terræ, orbis lumen, sacerdotem Altissimi*, VICARIUM CHRISTI, CHRISTUM DOMINI: POSTREMO DEUM PHARAONIS." *De Consid.*

I think it must strike those who read Bishop Newton's "deduction of the Line of Witnesses through the entire period of the Dark Ages," as a very remarkable, if not incredible, thing, that the APOCALYPTIC WITNESSES should have prophesied for ages with the MARK OF THE BEAST on their foreheads. Yet I know not what else to understand. Did the witness Gerbert pass through his Pontificate without the mark of the Beast? Did the Bishop of Orleans, the Archbishop of Florence, and the Abbots of Flora and Clairvaux, escape the stigma? If Bernard had not the mark of the Beast, that mark is not, I think, to be found in prostrate devotion to the Papacy; yet, if protestation against the corruption of the church, and comparative purity of doctrine, did not constitute him a witness, I know not what man before his time could claim that character. It is indeed serving two masters, in a way of which I can form no idea, and seems to me to be joining together, what God has put asunder, as far as the East from the West. I think the devotion which our Lord and Master requires, will not permit us to talk of a man's being an accredited witness for Christ, on some points, "though in *other respects* devoted" to Antichrist. I leave it to others to explain how a man can at once bear on his forehead the mark of the Beast and the Seal of the living God.⁶³

l. iv. c. vii. The reader will hardly be persuaded that Bernard addressed this to one whom he even suspected of being the Man of Sin.

⁶³ See Scott's Commentary on Rev. xiv. 1—5, where he identifies the hundred and forty and four thousand who were sealed, with the

Such, however, are the witnesses adduced; and I think the reader will agree with Mede, who states, that until the twelfth century, no one *suspected* that the Pope was Antichrist, and fixes the year 1120 as the beginning of the separation of the pious from the Church of Rome.⁶⁴ He is, therefore, obliged to suppose, that "the saints" had followed Antichrist nearly seven hundred years without finding it out. During that period, I think it must be admitted that they did not know, that they had been delivered into the hand

witnesses: and adds from Mr. Faber, "by these hundred and forty-four thousand, I understand peculiarly *the depressed church in the wilderness*, previous to the time of the *Reformation*: for history sufficiently demonstrates, that there have been in every age some faithful worshippers, who consented not to *the general apostacy*, but who prophesied, although in sackcloth, against its abominations."

⁶⁴ "Nondum enim Romanum Pontificem esse magnum illum et *κρίως* dictum Antichristum vel Florentinus Antistes, *vel alii suspicati sunt*: sed alium triennalem et semestrem expectabant." And he adds, after speaking of a work said to be written in the year 1120, "Atque hoc fuit secessionis piorum a Romana Ecclesia initium; neque ante hoc tempus quicquam ex omni christionorum memoria auditum fuisse crediderim de Papatu magno illo et *κρίως* dicto Antichristo, neque alium expectandum esse."—*Rev. Ant. Works*, p. 721, 722. "Mr. Mede supposes, and seems indeed to have proved, that the true doctrine of Antichrist was, and was intended to be, a mystery or secret, till the twelfth century. Whence it follows, that the testimonies hitherto alledged are *only passionate or declamatory exaggerations*, or to be esteemed, as he says, *pro parabolice et κατ' ἀνέγκην dictis, declamatorum more*."—*Works*, p. 722. I admit the truth of the observation."—Will the reader believe that these are the words of Bishop Hurd? If he doubts, let him refer to a note, on the very page opposite to that which I have quoted, and understand, if he

of the little horn, and that the Pope did not assume that character by making war upon them.

Let me not be misunderstood to be the advocate of the Papacy. God forbid that I should deny, or extenuate, its heresies or its crimes; least of all would I do it, while the mushroom wisdom of "a liberal and enlightened age" is endeavouring to confound all distinctions in religion—when the brayings of operative declaimers echo back the bleatings of higher assemblies, to assure us that Protestants are Papists in all but the name, and that the fathers of our church died at the stake to maintain a distinction without a difference. These are days when all protestants, and especially a protestant clergy, are called upon to watch against, and resist, the attacks of their enemies, and the more mischievous ignorance of their friends. I know that they cannot do this without the hazard of misconstruction—so liberal indeed has this age become, to all but old-fashioned principles, that if they express their opinion, the clergy may be charged with interested views; and, even in quarters where it might be expected that high association would at least restrain individual grossness, if it could not give candour, courtesy, or wisdom, they may be told that it is done "in a way of trade." It is nevertheless to be done by all fair, honest, and christian means; and, at such a time, as a priest of the Church of England, I

can, the attempt which is there made to reconcile statements so contradictory.

should be sorry to be thought, for one moment, the advocate of a corrupt church, from which, through God's mercy, we are separated, not merely by name, or political constitution, but by a pure and scriptural faith. Yet, sure I am, that the protestant cause requires not error or even false colouring for its support; and I would not willingly suppose any reader so dishonest, as to wish for the suppression of truth. Surely, even if we should not consider the Papacy either as Antichrist or the little horn, we leave it more curses than its bitterest enemy could desire to see fulfilled. Surely it has blood enough to answer for, if we look only to its transactions *since* the twelfth century. And in fact, what did the Bishops of Rome do for ages after the period when the saints were delivered into their hands, that could be called MAKING WAR upon them, OVERCOMING, and WEARING THEM OUT? "The quiescence of the little horn,"⁶⁵ after the delivery of the saints into his hand, is treated as a thing not naturally to be supposed; yet so far as I can learn from history, there had been Bishops of Rome for more than a thousand years, before any one of them took upon him to make war upon the saints.⁶⁶ During all this time (if they opposed the progress of his pretensions to supremacy) the saints never doubted that he was a christian bishop—never withdrew from

⁶⁵ See before, p. 32.

⁶⁶ "The Man of Sin," says Bishop Hurd, "had a *convenient time* to display himself, and to grow up," &c. p. 230.

christian communion with him—never once suspected that they were sealing their own damnation, by receiving his mark on their foreheads.

It appears to me, that the line of argument pursued by Bishop Hurd, in order to prove that Pagan Rome was not Antichrist, is of equal, or even greater force to shew, that the Bishop of Rome is not Antichrist, or the little horn: "now this circumstance," says the Bishop, "ye will surely think not a little remarkable, that they, who lived under the Emperors, and felt the whole weight of their tyrannous persecution, should not apply the prophetic notes and characters of Antichrist, to *them*, if indeed the prophecies had been fairly capable of such application. This, I say, is exceedingly remarkable: for men are but too apt even to wrest the Scriptures to a sense, which favours their own cause, or gratifies their passions; and to find a completion of prophecy in events, which fall out in their own days, and concern themselves (as we see from so many absurd applications of the Apocalypse, justly objected to protestant writers); though, when such events are passed, and impartially considered, no such accomplishment of prophecy can be discerned in them.

"When the Church of Rome, therefore, now pretends that Antichrist is to be sought in Imperial and Pagan Rome, ye will naturally ask how it came to pass, that the ancient fathers, who had the best opportunity of seeing the conformity of the prophecies, and were so much interested in those trans-

'actions, should yet overlook such conformity, if it
'had been real, and fairly marked out by the pro-
'phecies, when interpreters of these days are so quick
'sighted? And to this question, no just and satis-
'factory answer can be given, but that in the opinion
'of those fathers, the characters of Antichrist were
'not sufficiently applicable to the Roman Emperors;
'or if they were, that certain express clauses in the
'prophecies themselves forbade that application of
'them. Either way, their conduct forms a strong
'presumption, that the Antichrist of the prophets was
'not, and could not be, the Roman Emperor.⁶⁷'

Bishop Newton, opposing Wetstein, uses a similar
argument; "If this prophecy was fulfilled as these
'critics conceive, before the destruction of Jerusalem,
'it is surprising that none of the fathers should agree
'with any of them in the same application, and that
'the discovery should first be made sixteen or seven-
'teen hundred years after the completion. The fathers
'might differ, and be mistaken in the circumstances
'of a prophecy which was yet to be fulfilled; but
'that a prophecy should be remarkably accomplished
'before their time, and they be totally ignorant of
'it, and speak of the accomplishment as still future,
'is not very credible, and will always be a strong
'presumptive argument against any such interpre-
'tation."⁶⁸

May we not in like manner argue that, if the Pope

⁶⁷ Introduction, p. 222.

⁶⁸ Diss. XXII. vol. II. p. 389.

did not for so many ages perform the part assigned to
the little horn, it may well lead us to suspect, that he
was not the person prefigured by that symbol; if he
did, it is strange indeed, that those "who had the best
'opportunity of seeing the conformity of the prophe-
'cies, and were so much interested in those trans-
'actions, should yet overlook such conformity, if it
'had been real and fairly marked out by the pro-
'phecies."

But, explaining as we may the ignorance of former
ages, what is the state of things *now*? Here is the
church of Christ, after writhing a millennium under
the tyranny of the blasphemer, asking WHEN came I
into his hands? Am I, or am I not, there now? It is
strange indeed, that she should need to ask these
questions; but it is stranger still, that her most en-
lightened guides should not agree in an answer.
Surely this is not a subordinate matter; and surely it
is not a trifling discrepancy, when Mede and Bishop
Newton (to say nothing of the living) differ almost
three centuries. Widely as I disagree, on some points,
with the writer of an article in the Theological Re-
view, which has fallen into my hands since most of
these pages were written, I entirely concur with him
when, speaking of the Apocalypse, he says, "The
'mine has not yet been laid open, and no man must
'feel himself entitled to say, that it shall have been
'opened by himself, but on the evidence of something
'more authentic than his own belief of his success.
'The prophecy was given, as all prophecies, for the

‘honour of God, and the enlightening of man. To
 ‘say that it is incapable of clear and convincing inter-
 ‘pretation; is to say, what we cannot under any shape
 ‘admit, that the design of God has been frustrated.
 ‘But as its purpose was to produce conviction, it must
 ‘be laid down as a first principle with the interpreter,
 ‘that GENERAL CONVICTION IS THE ONLY TEST. The
 ‘individual or his party may be satisfied, but this is
 ‘nothing, without the satisfaction of that various mul-
 ‘titude, whose verdict is beyond partiality or passion,
 ‘and for whose wisdom, encouragement, and advance
 ‘in the faith, all revelation was given.”⁶⁹

This “general conviction” (thanks be to God) we have in some cases. We can, and we do, look to fulfilled prophecy as a bulwark of our faith. After the prophet had said, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a child,” ages rolled on; and while it was still future, we know not how much, or by how many, it was understood: but we know, that when “the fulness of the time was come,” and the prediction was accomplished, the church of God was not suffered to remain in darkness—she was not left to wander up and down, asking “Is this He that should come, or look we for another?” No—from the day of Simeon to this hour, her joyful acclamation hath been, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”—her steady eye has never turned from the bright star of hope and promise that first led her to Bethlehem—her unwaver-

⁶⁹ No. VII. p. 120.

ing faith has been, that he was despised and rejected of men, and that they hid as it were their faces from him; her well authenticated records attest, as matters of history, how all they that saw him laughed him to scorn—that they pierced his hands and his feet—that they parted his garments among them, and on his vesture they cast lots—that they gave him vinegar to drink. His disciples know well, when, and how, he was numbered with transgressors, and how his grave was made with the wicked and with the rich in his death.

But there is no need to argue this matter—we point the infidel to the captive Jew, and the wandering Arab; but who challenges him with the slain witnesses? We set before him the predicted triumphs of Cyrus; but do we expect his conversion from the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon? We send him to muse on the ruined city of David, and to search for the desolate scite of Babylon; but who builds his argument on the opened seals of the Apocalypse? And why is this? I do not speak hastily, and I would not speak uncharitably—but I cannot suppress my conviction, that it is because the necessity of filling up a period of 1260 years, has led to such forced interpretation of language, and to such a constrained acquiescence in what is unsatisfactory to sound judgment, that we should be afraid not only of incurring his ridicule, but of his claiming the same licence, which we have ourselves been obliged to assume. I firmly believe that the error lies, in adopting an interpreta-

tion, which requires us to spread the events predicted respecting three years and a half still future, over more than twelve centuries already past; and which thus sends us to search the page of history for the accomplishment of prophecies still unfulfilled. The importance of rectifying such an error, if it exists, will be admitted by all; and the question of its existence is that which I wish to see investigated. I therefore beg the reader, whom I would willingly suppose to prefer truth to system, to examine the prophecies in question; endeavouring, for the time, to forget whatever he may know of the various interpretations which have been offered; and may He, who is the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift, grant to him, and to myself, by his grace and his Spirit, a right judgment to understand, and a true faith to believe, whatever he has seen fit to reveal in his most holy word!

ERRATA.

Page 38, line 34, ... for *Is it* read *It is*.

39, 7, note, for *is the* read *is in the*

54, 5, note, for *Iposque* read *Ipososque*.

54, 10, note, for *probletical* read *prophetical*.